

The Examiner rejected independent Claim 1 as being indefinite because it "fails to positively recite the process of generating the data/information." This rejection is respectfully traversed. Claim 1 recites the step of "utilizing the single database to generate information regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers." This language clearly, unambiguously, and positively recites that the information is generated using the single database. The language proposed by the Examiner is exactly the same as the original claim language in both meaning and scope, but does not more positively define the step. Amendment of the claim is, therefore, not believed to be necessary or desirable.

The Examiner also rejected independent Claim 1 as being obvious in view of the combined teachings of the Dahan et al. and McKay et al. references. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 defines the invention as a method of generating information regarding the quality of performance of a plurality of suppliers that each supply products to a vendor. Initially, data is gathered regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers in a plurality of different computer databases. The gathered data is stored from the plurality of different computer databases in a central controller. The stored data is then converted in the central controller into a single database, and the single database is used to generate information regarding the quality of performance of the plurality of suppliers.

The examiner stated that the Dahan et al. reference teaches "storing the gathered data from the plurality of different computer databases in a central controller," identifying Column 3, Lines 58-66. However, the identified portion of the Dahan et al. reference states:

"The administrator computer 310 represents the work station of an administrator who sets up the virtual object hierarchy and preferred search schemas using software shown as administrator configuration software 315. The user computer 330 represents the work station of a user that utilizes the virtual object hierarchy and search schemas set up by the administrator to search for existing components or information using software shown as user search module 335."

Applicants respectfully note that there is nothing in this citation, or any other part of the Dahan et al. reference, that teaches "storing the gathered data

from the plurality of different computer databases in a central controller”. The Dahan et al. reference teaches leaving the data in their original database(s) and using its “virtual object hierarchy” to allow a user computer to search the data. The Dahan et al. reference is not directed toward gathering data in one central controller, but in accessing the databases from a user computer wherever the database(s) are. Without a disclosure of this claimed component of applicants' invention applicants submit that the claimed invention cannot be considered obvious. The teachings of the McKay et al. reference do not fill this gap. The McKay et al. reference merely teaches that quality control data can be gathered and disseminated, as acknowledged by the Examiner.

With regard to the rejection of Claim 2, applicants respectfully disagree with the rejection. There is nothing in the teachings of the Dahan et al. reference pointed to by the Examiner (Column 3, lines 26-34) that suggests that the data bases are non-compatible. Just because the databases contain different information (mechanical and electrical components) or database management systems and a centralized management system, does not suggest that these databases are "non-compatible", and the Dahan et al. reference does not say they are non-compatible. The teachings of the Dahan et al. reference that the databases are "independent" is not a teaching of "non-compatible".

With regard to Claim 3, since it is dependent from Claim 2, it is directed to converting non-compatible databases to a single compatible database. For at least the reasons set out above, Claim 3 is believed to be patentable. In addition, there is nothing in the sections cited by the Examiner (Column 3, Lines 26-34 and 49-51 and Column 7, Lines 10-17) that suggests taking non-compatible databases and making them into a single compatible database. Dahan does not say that any of the databases are non-compatible. With regard to the citation of Column 7, Lines 10-17, the "physical cleansing" referred to is defined in the previous paragraph as making the unit of measure consistent throughout or changing abbreviations into complete words. This does not suggest taking non-compatible databases and making them compatible and

storing them in a single database in a central controller, as claimed by applicants.

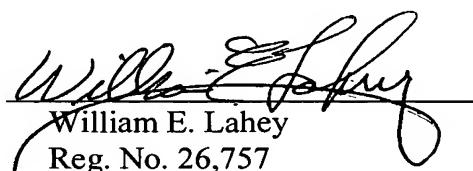
With regard to the rejection of Claims 14-16, the broad disclosure of the Dahan et al. reference does not disclose or suggest the specific operations claimed on the specific data types claimed or assembling it into the information as claimed. It does not disclose, generating a non-conforming material report (Claim 14), transmitting the non-conforming material report to the supplier (Claim 15), and requesting a corrective action report (Claim 16). The McKay et al. reference does nothing to teach these features since it only broadly discusses "quality of performance data" and none of the claimed steps.

Applicants submit that the Examiner is improperly applying hindsight to provided the claimed features. It is only in applicants' specification that the claimed features are found, not in the cited references as pointed out above.

With regard to the Examiner's request for a specification of which claims are supported by which provisional applications and the request that the inventors, or others, supply capabilities of the software referred to in the specification, and at what times they existed, are respectfully declined in view of the traverse of the rejection as detailed above, since that information is irrelevant if the prior art cited by the Examiner is insufficient, as asserted by applicants, to make the claimed invention obvious.

In view of the forgoing amendments and remarks, applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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